HARAMBEE FLAME!

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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Afrikans are beautiful in our own right rather than at the expense of any other ethnic group. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural exchange is germane to human growth.

EDITORIAL

We've heard the explanations: Police are under a lot of stress because of ever-increasing crime and the growth of both street violence and the number and sophistication of weapons in the hands of the "criminal element." Training of police has not kept pace with the demographic changes that large urban areas have undergone; namely, the thickening of populations of people of color. But as Rodney King lay there on the pavement still attached to the wires of the stun gun, the police who were beating, kicking, and stomping him were not behaving in a fashion suggestive of anger, frustration, or rage. And these are the kinds of emotions we would expect of police acting out of stress or a misunderstanding or fear of persons of other cultures or nationalities. These police seemed to be genuinely enjoying themselves. This was the demeanor indicated by the video tape. That their beating of King was done in a spirit of glee is supported by the tapes of audio transmissions of police communications. These tapes also confirm the racist component of the L.A.P.D. members' motives in their administration of L.A. Law. Rodney King was, in the eyes of his victimizers, not a human being. He was a deer transfixed before the headlights of the brave hunter's pick-up, a duck on the pond, a buffalo before the barrel of a tamer-of-the-West's repeating rifle. Rodney King's brutalization was a display of the "pioneer spirit"--If it moves, kill it.

We heard it from numerous U.S. soldiers as "desert storm" unfolded: "We're going to kick some butt." We see it at the hockey games, the fans waiting anxiously on the edge of their seats for the fights to break out, for some blood to flow. As much as some of us want to focus on the issue of adequacy or inadequacy of sensitivity training as we think about the beating of King, the problems which that beating was symptomatic of are far more fundamental than lack of sensitivity to the cultures of people of color or police stress.

The problems are racism and an obsession with violence and killing, which seem to have been historically characteristic of Western culture. This European trait, especially common among males, of a proclivity toward excessive aggression, when combined with racism, makes for a very potent emotional and psychological substance. It becomes even more explosive when stress and related elements are added.

But before we take these matters further, we must be clear on what racism is. What it is not is racial prejudice. It may be that all people have some forms of prejudice, in which we pre-judge other people on the basis of assumptions and stereotypes which we associate with certain of their characteristics. In racial prejudice, people of one so-called "race" (How can there simultaneously be a human race and separate races of humans?) pre-judge persons because they belong to another "race." Racism, or racialism, is something far more insidious. It is the general belief on the parts of members of one "race" that their "race" is superior to others, that their "race" has a right to subjugate the "inferior races," and it is the development and use of, or the intent of using, institutions to accomplish and/or maintain the subjugation of the "inferior races." While racial prejudice may be a natural trait among groups of people in general, racism has to be taught. Planning must go into its effective implementation.

If those African people in Los Angeles, and in other U.S. cities, who are speaking out against police violence don't understand the nature of racism and its deep-rootedness in America's Caucasian population and don't recognize the aggressive and violent traits inherent in European, or Euro-American, cultures, it is not possible for them to come forward with proposals that can truly be effective in dealing with police brutalization of African people. Too often, their view of the situation is far too simplistic: There are

(Cont. on page 4)

BOOKS

AFROCENTRIC SELF-INVENTORY & DISCOVERY WORKBOOK by Useni Eugene Perkins has been developed for U.S.-born African youth. It covers the following topics: Meaning of Afrocentricity
Black Value System
Afrocentric Self-Esteem
Knowing Your Family Tree
Afrocentric Developmental Activities
Special Days to Celebrate
Afrocentric Community Service Projects
Afrocentric Exercises
Appreciation of African American Culture
Famous Quotations of Inspiration & Struggle
African American Spirituals and Gospel
African Proverbs
Traditional African Names
Reference Books

From the introduction to the workbook:

"This workbook is for you--the African American youth-- to help you better understand and appreciate yourself, our people and your place in the universe. It is intended to help you become a stronger, more intelligent and better person so you can achieve your true potential and be an asset to your community. This workbook is designed to do two things. First, it will help you to make an inventory of yourself as it relates to certain principles that are considered to be desirable for African American youth. Secondly, it will help you to discover new things that should help you to better appreciate your beautiful culture and heritage..."

The workbook is intended for youth of ages 12-15. For information on ordering, contact Third World Press; 7524 South Cottage Grove Ave.; Chicago, IL; 60619.

good and bad police. And of course the solutions they frequently offer have to do with the weeding out of the bad(racist, emotionally unstable, etc.) police through psychological screening, behavior/performance evaluations, etc. Such programs are helpful in that they can serve to weed out the most extreme cases of racist paranoia, psychosis, or other impairments.

But the question of police brutality is not just a matter of there being good and bad cops. Nor even is it only a matter of racism and European or Euro-American inclination toward violence. Were this the case, how could we explain the fact that many cases of brutalization of African people involve African police? A partial explanation is that African people in this country have been heavily influenced by the dominant culture and have taken on many of its traits and that many Africans in police forces, like their counterparts in other areas of employment, knowing the prevalence of racism, often go out of their way to prove to their Caucasian bosses and "colleagues" that they are team-players.

Beyond all this lies something that is about as basic as a thing can get: the very role and function of the police in this society, and in most, if not all, others. The essential role and function of the police is that of preserving and protecting the status quo(things as they are). In practical terms, this means that the role of police in this country is to protect and preserve government(local, state, and national), government agencies, and government property; to protect and preserve private property(particularly, the property of the wealthy); and to protect and preserve the position of dominance on the part of Caucasians in this society. When police enforce the law, they are enforcing laws that are designed and interpreted to perpetuate the political/economic system as it is. Yes, it is also the role and function of the police to protect the public. However, the differences

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EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(parent chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, Inc.), is a pan-Africanist newsletter. The FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people, events and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any distinctions between African people based solely on place of birth. References in the FLAME to African people are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereof, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter "black" or other terms designating African people. This is our practice because we do not wish to diminish the integrity and authenticity of the articles we excerpt from.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as those of the organization. Generally speaking, all unsigned articles are by the editor, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa(p.k.a. D. Rice).

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 1200 words, though longer pieces will not be automatically rejected. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. We are looking for poems which address African folks' lives, the conditions we face, and our struggles to rise above those things which hinder us. Submitted poems should not sacrifice power and beauty for the sake of uniform rhythm and/or rhyme. Send submissions to the editor c/o HARAMBEE FLAME; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68502 -0500.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

Organization Establishes Link-Up With United Nations To Address Mistreatment Of U.S. Minorities

"...Yussuf Naim Kly, an author and associate professor of international relations at the University of Regina...and several other interested parties--primarily black organizers from Canada and the U.S.--founded an organization called the International Human Rights Association for American Minorities(IHRAAM), which is designed to hold the U.S. accountable for the treatment of its national minorities. In December 1990, IHRAAM became the first organization dealing with the problems of American minorities in U.S. history to gain official status in the United Nations as a non-governmental organization. With this official recognition, IHRAAM can bring an international focus to this nation's internal racial problems...

"Kly is a former associate of Malcolm X; he headed the Montreal bureau of Malcolm's Organization of Afro-American Unity during the '60s...

"'One of our most important tasks', Kly says, 'is to get American minorities to review and amend the draft Declaration on Minorities, which is presently before the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and is in the process of becoming international law, binding on all states and parties, including the U.S. Once ratified, the Declaration on Minorities will provide significant recourse for aggrieved minorities or nationalities seeking the protection of international law against violations of their human rights by domestic governments'..."

-from "The Racist Reality Of Police Culture," which appears on pages 7 and 8 of the March 27-April 2 IN THESE TIMES(Chicago, Ill.)

Hearings In New York For Former Panthers

"...More than 100 supporters filled the courtroom of Judge Morris E. Lasker in the Federal District Court in Manhattan. A team of defense lawyers argued that the court should review the evidence and the actions of the trial judge, the prosecutor and the police during the trial, in which the three former members of the Black Panther Party were convicted.

"Political prisoners Bell, Albert Nuh Washington and Jalil Abdul Montaquin(Anthony Bottom) were convicted of the 1971 murder of two New York City policemen. The three men were convicted in their second trial in May 1975, after the previous one had ended in a hung jury...

"In fact, the thrust of this hearing is based on evidence obtained from FBI documents through the Freedom of Information Act. One confidential FBI directive urged that Black militants be 'arrested on every possible charge until they could no longer make bail. The purpose of counterintelligence action is to disrupt the BPP, and it is immaterial whether the facts support the charge'...

"FOIA documents indicate that under the code name 'Newkill', a meeting was held at the White House on May 21, 1971, five days after the two New York City policemen were killed. The defense alleges that it possesses directives signed by Nixon staffer John Erlichmann and J. Edgar Hoover with instructions to cover up Newkill. This, says the defense, included withholding any information that might be favorable to the defendants..."

-from "Freedom Appears Closer For Jailed Former Black Panther Party Members," which appears on pages 5 and 50 of the March 23 THE NEW YORK AMSTERDAM NEWS

African Peoples Farmers Market Exemplifies Exemplifies Principle Of Self-Determination

"...Located in the heart of the African community of Bedfor-Stuyvesant, at the corner of Macon Street and Nostrand Avenue, the Market evolved out of Brother Malcolm X's philosophy of economic self-reliance.

"The particular incident that game rise to the market took place in August 1988. A Guyanese grandmother was brutally attacked by a Korean merchant in a fruit and vegetable store on Fulton and Nostrand Avenues. Instantaneously, the community came to her defense. For the next two months, from opening until closing, the resistance sounded, and Tropic Fruit finally closed.

"The community demanded a replacement, a place where we could begin to recapture our community..

"Although the Market is only open on Saturdays from 9 am to 6 pm, it is a week-round concern... Within a short time span, the goods are transported and refrigerated...

"A team of volunteers from the community rotates the various responsibilities. Besides the visible work of purchasing the food, cleaning the site, and actually manning the market, there are equally important tasks that are not as easily seen. These include promoting the market, and bringing the idea to the wider community that African people can work together to provide the goods and services needed by our people...

-from "Saturday Is Market Day!," which appears on page 4 of the March ARM THE MASSES(N.Y.)

Egypt, The Gulf War, And U.S. Manipulations

"...As part of the U.S.-sponsored petrol-Pax Americana, Egypt is being enlisted to protect the region's oil wealth from future Saddam Husseins in an all-Arab peacekeeping force that includes Syria, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. U.S. policymakers are also hoping Egypt can play an instrumental role, possibly by convening a not-quite-international peace conference in Cairo, in the unlikely event that Arab-Israeli peace breaks out.

"In exchange, Egypt will get debt relief to the tune of $13 billion from the U.S. and Europe(external debt was estimated at $50 billion before the war), advanced American fighter jets and perhaps new loans from the International Monetary Fund. Egypt will also be permitted by the monarchs of Mecca and Medina to assist in protecting the Islamic holy lands, a role it hasn't held since Moslem armies expelled the Crusaders in the 12th century.

"...Since the war ended, authorities have floated the Egyptian pound against the U.S. dollar and are planning to relax other central controls on the economy as part of austerity measures demanded by international lenders. So far, the pound has depreciated by about one-third, putting the burden of price hikes for everything from food to imported consumer goods on Egypt's underpaid and underemployed majority..." ...

-from "In Egypt, A Dual Political Peril Dies Hard," which appears on page 2 of the March 27-April 2 IN THESE TIMES

REBELS IN MOZAMBIQUE VIOLATE PEACE AGREEMENT

"The one and only agreement between the Mozambican government and the South African-backed Mozambique National Resistance seemed close to collapse at mid-March as the rebels announced they were reneg-

ing on the accord.

"The Dec. 1 agreement covers the Zimbabwean forces deployed in Mozambique. It restricts the Zimbabwean troops to the Beira and Limpopo Corridors, the two rail lines that link landlocked Zimbabwe to the Mozambican coast. In return, the MNR pledged to cease all military operations against the two corridors.

"The accord was clearly coming unstuck when, in late February, MNR commander-in-chief Afonso Dhlakama announced that he had authorized renewed attacks on the Limpopo Corridor on the grounds that the Zimbabweans were still operating 'all over the country'.

"The MNR had delivered a list of 52 places outside the two corridors where it claimed the Zimbabwean army was still stationed...

"The international Joint Verification Commission in charge of monitoring implementation of the ... agreement has investigated the MNR claims...nowhere was there any evidence that the Zimbabweans had violated the agreement...

"The MNR has implemented its threat to attack the Limpopo Corridor. In late February there were five incidents, mainly of sabotage, such as the unscrewing of rails...

"The MNR says, meanwhile, that it is willing to resume negotiations with the Mozambican government--but not about a cease-fire. Instead, Dhlakama wants to discuss 'political issues', including the new constitution and the law on registration of political parties. Only after agreement is reached on these questions, and on details of a 'transitional period' before the holding of elections, should the talks turn to a cease-fire, he says..."

-from "Mozambique Pact Goes Up In Smoke," which appears on page 13, Mar. 27 THE GUARDIAN

Impact Of Turmoil In U.S.S.R. On Southern Africa

"It was just a few short years ago that the embattled revolutions in Mozambique and Angola regarded the Soviet Union and other socialist countries as 'natural allies'...

"Now...Some of those 'natural allies' have disappeared(one, the German Democratic Republic, has literally been wiped from the map), while the most important of all, the Soviet Union, is in such turmoil that it can no longer be considered a reliable partner.

"Countries such as Hungary and Czechoslovakia, which used to make a very public point of supporting the international campaign of sanctions against South Africa, are now eagerly doing business with Pretoria...

"Now there is no counterweight to Western, and particularly U.S. power in the region. Even Zimbabwe, with the strongest economy of the majority-ruled Southern African states, is accepting World Bank/IMF dictates designed to ensure the dominance of Western capital.

"Mozambique, with its economy shattered by a decade of destabilization, is now entirely at the mercy of Western aid donors...

"Angola's oil provides it with more room for maneuver. Even so, the switch to a multi-party political system...is a very clear concession to U.S. power. An end to the war in Angola appears close at hand...but the settlement will be largely on Washington's terms. This will ensure that the Unites States- and South African-backed UNITA rebels will be in a strong position to contest for power in the new constitutional framework..."

-from "Southern Africa Faces Harsh New Reality," which appears on page 15 of the April 3 THE GUARDIAN

in police response time to calls from Caucasian communities as compared to their response time to calls from African communities, similar differences as related to affluent communities in contrast to poor, the level and quality of police service overall as it differs from Caucasian communities to African and from affluent to poor make it very clear that, in the minds of many police and in the philosophies of their departments, the "public" means "white public." Africans and other people of color are too often "gorillas in the mist" or "lizards."

Within the context of this racist and classist society, the most practical and effective solution to police brutalization is community control. In other words, African people who live in cities where we are minorities must push for the establishment of police precincts or districts in our communities, that would be headed by commissioners or boards of commissioners which we would elect and have power of recall over, and which would be funded on the basis of the percentages of city populations that we comprise. In cities where we are majorities, we should seek the establishment of civilian review boards which we would elect and which would have actual power to conduct investigations, subpoena testimony, and fire police found to be guilty of serious misconduct against citizens. In addition, it is in our interests to have policies put into place which require that police who work in our communities live in our communities.

The key question in all of this is one of accountability. Whatever programs we devise, police must be accountable to us and under our control. Otherwise, we can expect that they will continue to operate under the principle that African people have no rights which Caucasians, or their African henchmen, are bound to respect.

-Editor

L.A. REVISITED

Burn, baby, burn
it's twenty-one years after
an odd number of odd years
if you are twenty-one years old
you probably don't know how insignificant
a person can be...

burnin' Watts years after
twenty-one years after
only barely noticeable
that the changes are skin deep
you probably aren't aware of how insecure
a door can be...

Burn, baby, burn
it was a slogan back when
people were in the streets
the oppressors were in tanks
you couldn't fathom how insincere
a politician could be...

burn by molatov
candlelight & cocktails
propaganda passing for news
but fire was creating a new equality
you'd stretch your imagination wide
and still you would not
be able to comprehend just how fearful
a group of caucasians would be...

Burn, baby, burn
nearly a quarter of a century ago
left the impression of looting
lost in an issue of unforthcoming justice
you've no idea just how opportunistic
a poor person can be...

burnin' down buildings
in South Central Los Angeles
if you look at new construction
there are far more shopping distractions
you've no memory of how far
a dollar could go...

Burn, baby, burn
if i can't have what's mine
you can't have it either
there were few who understood this
it's impossible to predict how destructive
our anger will be...

...burned out sun
from a far part of the galaxy
teach, form your infinite wisdom
point the way to regeneration

-Idu Mbaka Maduli

Idu lives in Omaha and, with his wife Laura, works with African children and youth in the theatrical arena.

.....

Bulletin--As of this writing, two men, Abdul Shahid and James Moss, are apparently going to be court-martialed by the Navy for an alleged conspiracy to mutiny aboard the U.S.S. Ranger. We don't know for certain, at this point, whether the two men are African. But if they are, they should certainly be given support by African people and organizations who believe that it is time for us to stop spilling blood on behalf of Uncle Sam.

BACK IN TIME

Equally ominous was an incident that occurred in the winter of 1990 in Norfolk, Virginia. Columnist Joe Jackson wrote in a local publication, THE COMPASS, that "the police department received a request from an outside federal agency to provide a (military) site in an urban setting." The site provided, to no one's surprise, was an African-American neighborhood in the heart of Norfolk. One morning its residents looked out their windows and saw 15-20 men dressed in camouflage fatigues apparently shooting at each other with what looked like uzis as they ducked through a row of condemned houses. When confronted by local residents, the men refused to identify themselves. Since they had no idea of what was going on, the African-Americans called the police but got no response. The next day the strangers returned, this time shooting paint pellet guns. One resident decided to photograph the proceedings and was warned to desist by the invaders. Again, the police were called but to no avail. The same group returned for a third day before finishing up whatever they were doing. It was only after they left that the police finally showed up to reassure the residents that they were not under attack by some unknown racists as many of them were beginning to think. When asked why the residents had not been informed about the so-called war games, a police spokesman, noted Jackson, said that "police had tried to contact residents before the war games, and had left word with clerks at a 7-Eleven across the street from the empty houses..."

Source: THE RACE: MATTERS CONCERNING PAN AFRIKAN HISTORY, CULTURE, AND GENOCIDE
Edited by Kiarri T-H. Cheatwood

ANNOUNCEMENTS

African-American Encyclopedia On Videotape

Trans-Atlantic Production Company of New York has announced the production of an African-American encyclopedia on videotape. According to the announcement, the encyclopedia consists of 100 tapes "providing insight into African descended people's experience in the United States and the world."

African scholars featured on these tapes include: Professor Ivan Van Sertima, Dr. John Henrik Clarke, Dr. Yosef Ben-Jochannan, and others. Included among the titles are: "Black Women In Antiquity," "African Presence In Early America," "The Africans In The U.S: The Decline Of The Civil Rights Movement," "Spiritual And Human Values In Africa Before European Contact," "Male-Female Relationships In African History," "The Black Hebrews," "Police Violence," "Development Of The African-American Child," etc.

For a complete listing of titles, prices, and so forth, write to: Trans-Atlantic Productions
616 East 23rd St.
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11210
(718)434-3047

THE RACE

Native Sun Publishers has published THE RACE: MATTERS CONCERNING PAN-AFRIKAN HISTORY, CULTURE, AND GENOCIDE, which is edited by Kiarri T-H. Cheatwood. The book is a collection of essays and speeches by John Henrik Clarke, Asa Hilliard, Mari Evans, Yosef ben-Jochannan, W. Mondo E. we Langa, Gloria Latimore Peace, and others and covers a range of topics including: cultural genocide, child-rearing practices, language and liberation, etc. To order, contact:

Native Sun Publishers
P.O. Box 13394
Richmond, VA 23225

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